
The Gift of the Past

OF THE

Board of Foreign Missions Reformed Church in the U. S. 1838—1913

BY
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SECRETARY

"The spirit of missionary endeavor is essential to any large work done by the local church."

"The foreign missionary zeal would seem to be the thermometer by which to test the benefactions of the Church."

"No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal wrought out these great things. They are from the Most High God."

"The people who do most for foreign missions are the people who do most for everything else, for home missions and for home charities."

"God gives us tasks not according to our strength; He summons us to tasks infinitely beyond our power. He summons us to tasks according to our strength reinforced by the Holy Spirit."

"Foreign missions are broad enough, hard enough, rewarding enough, to satisfy the soul that aspires to hardship and heroism. Here we find the moral safeguard of the Church—the true conserver of the test God has given to men."

REFORMED CHURCH BUILDING
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Helpful Data for Sermon on the Seventy-fifth Anniversary

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
SEPTEMBER 29-30, 1913

Suitable Texts:—Psalm 90:16-17.
Isaiah 49:6.
Romans 15:21.

WHAT THE WORK OF THE BOARD IS

The work of Foreign Missions presents the widest scope for the exercise of faith in God and love for humanity. It is the fruit of faith and the flower of love. It is the expulsive power of the life of Christ in the soul. It is the outward expression of the spiritual zeal of the Church. **The best history of a denomination is its missionary record.** A Church with a world-vision and a passion for souls will live, grow and prosper.

World evangelization is the supreme task of the Christian Church. To accomplish it there must be proper organization. The work is too great—the field too extensive—the demands too numerous—to be left to an individual or a congregation. Problems arise at home and on the mission fields that require expert knowledge for their wise solution. For this purpose the Church has set apart men, whose duty it is to devote their time to a study of these problems.

THE BOARD A SERVANT

The Board of Foreign Missions is the responsible agency through whom the Church carries on, in a united, wise and aggressive manner, its work in behalf of humanity and God. In a word, it is doing the work of the Church.

The General Synod elects the members of the Board, and it aims to select men of faith and devotion, of ability and prudence. With the exception of the Secretary and the Treasurer, the members do not receive any salary, but freely give their time and experience. A member of a certain Foreign Board said: "I could not be hired to do this work for \$5,000 a year, but I will do it gratuitously for the sake of Christ and my brethren."

The Church owes much to the Board. Though the members occasionally err in judgment, and fail in their efforts, yet we should trust them and believe that the cause they serve is fully as dear to them as to us. Dr. William N. Clarke, the eminent theologian, in "A Study of Christian Missions" expresses the following opinion:

"The fact ought to be taken more closely home to the popular Christian heart that a missionary society is conducting a work of exceptional magnitude and difficulty, under conditions that render misjudgment of its doings extremely easy; and that its officers deserve sympathetic and respectful judgment from all their brethren."

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THE BOARD AN ADMINISTRATOR

In discussing the personnel of the Boards of Missions, the Editor of *The Interior* says that, "So far from a ministerial life unfitting a man for practical affairs, the Church has command of the best brains in the country for the least money, and makes fewer business mistakes than the great corporations of which we hear so much."

The executive officer of the Board is the secretary,—the larger Boards having several secretaries. That the position of secretary should not be imagined to be one of the soft seats in Zion, Dr. Clarke says that "In respect of responsibility and laboriousness, there is scarcely any other Christian service that is comparable to that of the officers of such societies. Missionary secretaries have to conduct a work of which the delicacy and difficulty are very largely unappreciated."

The Board meets regularly on the first Tuesday in March and, in special session, whenever necessary. The Executive Committee meets every month, except in July and August. The business of the Foreign Board is more varied than that of any other Board in the Church. It pertains not only to office duties and field work, but to a multitude of details affecting the financial, industrial, political, educational, medical and diplomatic problems of Japan and China.

The members of the Board exercise great care in the handling of the funds. They know that the money comes from the poor and the rich; that it includes the widow's mite and the toiler's wage, and that it is sent on its mission of blessing by the prayers of loving hearts.

THE TASK

The Foreign Board deals with a world task. Until the Church realizes this fact, the Board will not receive the recognition, and support, and sympathy that it deserves. Foreign Missions is not one of many interests in the Church, but the chief enterprise of the Church. The Board of Foreign Missions in its work represents the entire Reformed Church. It is a unifying center for all the activities in our denomination. It is the aggressive force in unfolding to the mind of the Church the heart of God in the work of Missions. It is waging a constant campaign in behalf of a more systematic study of Missions, and the introduction of the best methods to accomplish the work of the Church.

Dr. F. F. Ellinwood, the late Secretary of the Presbyterian Foreign Board, said: "A Board of Foreign Missions is really a university of Christian beneficence."

I. A Board is a great Commissioning Society.

It appoints men and women to go and preach and teach the Gospel to the people in the non-Christian world. These leave home and country, to live and labor in strange lands, and among stranger people. In time the missionaries gather and train native preachers, teachers and helpers, who become valiant soldiers in the army of Christian conquest. All this involves a sacred obligation on the part of the Church. The Church will prove her faith by her works among the people who know not the God of our Salvation.

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II. A Board is a vast Church Erection Society.

It builds churches, schools, hospitals and residences for the missionaries. The latter are an absolute necessity. To compel a missionary family to live in a native house in the cold, damp climate of North Japan, or on the malarious mud floor in inland China, is poor economy and trifling with precious life.

III. A Board is a great Bureau of Education in the work of world evangelization.

Sufficient missionaries can never be sent from Christian lands to convert the world. A native ministry is necessary to a native Church. "India must convert India, and China must convert China." To train men and women in the schools for this work will require, later on, support in their work. There must also be a Christian literature. Many missionaries are spending years of hard labor in translating all manner of books into the language of the people. How few know of the difficulties in the study of the language before real Christian work can be undertaken.

RELATION OF THE BOARD TO THE CHURCH

The Foreign Board as the servant of the Church is not alone responsible for the success or failure of the work abroad. The Church must provide the workers and the funds for their support. If the work languishes, the blame rests with the Church. The Board directs, it cannot do the work.

The duty of the Board is to keep the Church in touch with the work, and to inspire the people with the spirit of larger giving. The officers view the fields as from a watch-tower. What they see and feel, they must impart to their constituency. It is their privilege and opportunity to arouse and inspire the Church to greater zeal and more liberal support. The Church has a right to look to the officers of the Board for a new vision of duty and opportunity.

The Board must keep before the Church the need of a continual advance until the Foreign Mission Policy of the Church can be fully carried out. This is not the time to stand still in the work of Missions. To do so will bring disaster. The standard must ever be kept to the front of the marching forces, so far ahead as to encourage, but never so far in advance as to dishearten. If the nine-tenths of the members could be led to give as liberally as the one-tenth, the work of the Board would advance with leaps and bounds.

A heavy debt is a proof that the Church has not kept pace with the Forward Movement. Although "a debt is no more a disgrace to a Mission Board than to a business house, or to a hospital, or to a nation," yet it greatly retards the work of the Church. The great duty of a Board is to keep before the Church the needs and opportunities of the fields abroad. What we all need, as pastors and people, is to possess such faith in the God of Missions, and so live our faith in the presence of all the people, that a new faith may be begotten in the Church that will sweep away every obstacle and lead the Hosts of God on to victory.

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EARLY FACTS ABOUT THE WORK

In the year 1834, the Classis of Susquehanna submitted to the Synod the question, "Whether the time is not at hand, when the Reformed Church, instead of giving its contributions as heretofore to other churches for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, should think of establishing an institution of its own for this purpose."

In the year 1835, the Classis of West Pennsylvania stated that it was "of the opinion that the German Reformed Church is not prepared to do much for the heathen, whilst so many of our own destitute brethren are crying, 'Come and help! Send us pastors and teachers!'"

In the same year, the Classis of Zion expressed "its willingness to co-operate with Synod in relation to Foreign Missions, upon any practicable plan."

In the year 1837, the Synod appointed a Committee to collect, during the ensuing year, all useful facts concerning the formation of a Foreign Missionary Society. The Committee reported in 1838, and its recommendations were adopted.

ORIGINAL MEMBERS

The Board was organized in the First Reformed Church, Lancaster, Pa., during the Meeting of Synod in 1838. The title of the Board was, "The Foreign Missionary Board of the German Reformed Church, in the United States of North America."

Twelve members were appointed, as follows:

Ministers	Elders
Dietrich Willers	Matthew Shaw
Bernard C. Wolff	John Seidenstricker
Samuel Gutelius	John J. Mayer
Samuel R. Fisher	Daniel Buckey
Elias Heiner	Burchert Mayer
John Cares	
Joseph F. Berg	

The Board was instructed to co-operate with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in a manner similar to that in which the Dutch Reformed, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches were then co-operating.

The first officers of the Board were: President, Rev. Dietrich Willers; Vice-President, Rev. Elias Heiner; Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Bernard C. Wolff; Recording Secretary, Rev. John Cares; Treasurer, Mr. John J. Mayer.

A NOBLE OFFER

Immediately upon the organization of the Board of Foreign Missions, five ministers arose and signified their willingness to support a missionary of the cross in heathen lands. The names of these servants of God and the amount given are as follows:

Rev. Elias Heiner, Baltimore, Md....	\$120.00
Rev. Joseph F. Berg, Phila., Pa.....	120.00
Rev. Bernard C. Wolff, Easton, Pa....	120.00
Rev. Dan'l Zacharias, Frederick, Md..	120.00
Rev. Daniel Ziegler, York, Pa.....	120.00

These fathers have all fallen asleep in Jesus, but their works do follow them. "The Lord our God

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be with us as He was with our fathers," and help us to carry on the great work, so that it may not be said to our shame, "They began to build but were not able to finish."

The first offerings received by the Board after its organization were on October 23, 1838, from the German Reformed Church, Trenton, N. J., per pastor Rev. John H. Schmaltz, \$4.00, and the Ephrata Reformed Church, Lancaster County, Pa., per pastor Rev. D. Hertz, \$7.31½.

OUR FIRST MISSIONARY

The first foreign missionary of the Reformed Church was the Rev. Benjamin Schneider, D.D., who was born in Montgomery County, Pa., and labored under the American Board from 1833 to 1875—a period of 42 years.

From 1840 to 1865, the Board paid the contributions of our Church to the American Board, amounting to \$27,986.99, and the money was devoted towards the support of Missionary Schneider and his work.

Rev. Cornelius H. Patton, D.D., Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, recently paid this tribute to Dr. Schneider: "Our records show that he was a mighty force in the early days of the work in Turkey, both at Broosa and at Aintab, he being the founder of the latter station, which has become one of our greatest centers of educational, medical, relief and evangelistic work. Dr. Strong, our historian, assures me that Dr. Schneider was one of the really great missionaries of that pioneer period."

About 1860, a feeling of dissatisfaction began to manifest itself with the mode of carrying on our foreign work; we being merely contributors to another organization, without any mission properly our own. At the Synod held at Lebanon, Pa., arrangements were made to effect a transfer of the Mission at Aintab to our Board. A lengthy correspondence was carried on between Elder Rudolph F. Kelker, the Treasurer of our Board, and the Rev. Rufus Anderson, D.D., Secretary of the American Board. Both the American Board and Missionary Schneider thought such a transfer inexpedient. The American Board declined to surrender Missionary Schneider, but he continued a member of the Maryland Classis until the day of his death in 1877. The last money to the American Board was paid October 9, 1865.

NEAR THE DEAD LINE

The period from 1865 to 1878 is the Sahara in our Foreign Missionary work. No special interest was manifested in, and very little money given for, the spread of the Gospel abroad. The Church found itself in the midst of an intense theological controversy. Verily, the work of the Lord languishes in times of war!

From the reports of the Board to the General Synod, we find that the few remittances and the interest accrued from invested funds were not left lying idle in the treasury. To the German Evangelical Foreign Missionary Society, from 1872 to 1875, was paid \$979.81, which was applied towards the

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support of Rev. Oscar Lohr and his associate, Rev. Jacob Hauser, both missionaries of the Reformed Church, who were laboring in India, through whose ministry the Mission at Bismarck was founded.

In addition to this, from December, 1878, to March, 1886, the Board of Foreign Missions paid for the work among the Winnebago Indians in Wisconsin, established under Sheboygan Classis of the Synod of the Northwest, about \$1,500.

THE NEW ERA IN THE WORK

In the year 1878 the spirit of peace began a most gracious work in our General Synod at Lancaster, Pa., which, among other precious results, gave a new impetus to the Board of Foreign Missions. It was a happy coincidence that in the same church where the Foreign Board was originally organized, it should receive new life from the God of Missions.

The officers of the Board in 1878 were:
Rev. David Van Horn, D.D., President,
Rev. Charles H. Leinbach, D.D., Vice-President,
Rev. Thomas S. Johnston, D.D., Secretary,
Hon. Rudolph F. Kelker, Treasurer.

Among the members of the Peace Commission belonging to the Foreign Board were the following: Rev. David Van Horne, D.D., Rev. Clement S. Weiser, D.D., Elder Rudolph F. Kelker and Elder William H. Seibert.

THE BEGINNING OF WORK IN JAPAN

At the same meeting of General Synod, instructions were given to the Board of Foreign Missions to move forward in its work. Japan was determined upon as the field. On September 30, 1878, Rev. Ambrose D. Gring, the first missionary to Japan, was appointed. Mr. and Mrs. Gring arrived at Yokohama, June 1, 1879. Since that time the Board has sent out 31 missionaries, not including wives, of whom 19 are still in active service on the field.

OUR CHINA MISSION

By action of the General Synod, held at Tiffin, Ohio, in May, 1899, the Board was authorized to establish the China Mission. In the year 1900, Rev. William E. Hoy, D.D., organized the Mission at Yochow City, Hunan, China. Since then the Board has sent out 25 missionaries, not including wives, of whom 17 are still in active service.

Thousands of souls have been won for Christ since the organization of the Board. The property valuation of the Japan Mission is \$188,850, and of our China Mission, \$93,897. Total, \$282,747.

BEQUESTS

The first bequest to the Board, on record, is that of George B. Cook, of \$265, on August 18, 1861. The largest individual bequest is that of Elder N. B. Schmitt, of Woodstock, Virginia, \$9,806.04. The smallest bequest is that of Isaac Bruce, \$1.03. The smallest gift of record is one cent, given by Isaac Bruce, an inmate in the Montgomery County Alms-

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house. This became a seed-coin, to which were added contributions from members of the Church until the sum of \$1,200 was secured. This is a permanent investment and is known as the "One Cent Alms-house Fund." The total amount of bequests to the Board up to September 1, 1913, is \$73,252.90.

THE EXPENSES OF A YEAR

The Japan Mission and the China Mission submit at the beginning of each year estimates of their needs for the year. For the year 1912, the expenses of the Japan Mission were \$72,893.21, and of the China Mission, \$36,348.09. The Home Administration expenses were \$29,108.18.

RECEIPTS

From 1838 to 1878—approximately \$40,000,—an average of \$1,000 per year. From 1878, the beginning of the Japan Mission, until 1900, \$353,880.49. From 1900, the beginning of the China Mission, until 1912, \$1,103,456.09. From 1838 to 1912, \$1,497,336.58. From June 1, 1912, to June 1, 1913, \$146,019.95.

SOME FRUITS OF THE WORK

I. There has come to the Church a wider outlook and a greater vision of the world. The available literature has been, and is, of immense educational value. What a knowledge we have acquired of the regions beyond—the people who inhabit them, their customs, religions, characteristics, languages, history.

II. There exists a nobler conception of, and a broader sympathy for, the human brotherhood. "Am I my brother's keeper?" presses for an answer in the 20th century as at no other time since the words fell from the lips of Cain. Foreign Missions will make it easier for the Church to answer this tremendous problem.

III. There is a spirit of unity abroad in the Church, directly traceable to the influence of the work abroad. Foreign Missions leads the way in the matter of unity. The Christian forces are united in Japan as they are not in America. The consciousness of the task to establish the Kingdom has drawn the Christians in foreign lands together in this laudable effort. This same consciousness, will, in the end, heal the divisions and restore the broken unity of the Church in the Home Land.

THE OUTLOOK HOPEFUL

Surely the work done by the Church should be an earnest of the work that can be done, and that will be done.

The steady increase in the receipts for the three periods, 1838 to 1878, 1878 to 1900, 1900 to 1912, should encourage all hearts that the Church is on the high road to greater things.

The promises of God are all sufficient, if we but avail ourselves of them, to evangelize the 10,000,000 souls in Japan, China, and the Moslem World, the assumed responsibility of OUR SHARE OF THE WORLD.